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Date: April 30, 2018
To: Eligible Licensed Infant/Toddler Care Providers in Santa Cruz County
From: David Brody, Executive Director
Subject: **Thrive by Three Early Learning Scholarship Pilot Program**

Introduction

In January 2017, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted to establish the Thrive by Three Fund, dedicated to achieving improved outcomes for Santa Cruz County's youngest and most vulnerable children, prenatal through age 3, and their families.

Working with First 5 Santa Cruz County (F5 SCC) and other stakeholders, the BOS identified 6 desired outcomes for the fund:

- Decreased rates of substantiated child maltreatment and entries into foster care among infants and toddlers
- Increased percentage of young mothers getting prenatal care in the first trimester
- Decreased percentage of babies being born preterm and low birthweight
- Decreased percentage of mothers and fathers reporting hardships and emotional distress during pregnancy and the child's first three years of life
- Improved parental confidence, parenting practices, and parent-child relationships
- Increased access to high-quality care and early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers

Early Learning Scholarship Pilot Program

In subsequent BOS actions the board approved specific funding recommendations including allocation of up to \$70,000 for implementation of an "Early Learning Scholarship" pilot program (ELS-P) to be administered by F5 SCC. Modeled after San Francisco County's Early Learning Scholarship-Gap program, ELS-P is designed to provide an enhanced per-child reimbursement rate to help close the gap between the cost of quality infant and toddler care and available state subsidies.

The intent of the pilot program is to create a working mechanism that will allow the County of Santa Cruz (and possibly other funders in the future) to focus scarce local resources on the provision of high-quality care to vulnerable infants and toddlers in the county, with the long-term goals of increasing provider capacity and family access to quality care. An initial goal of the pilot program is also to help establish more formal linkages between licensed and subsidized infant/toddler care programs in Santa Cruz

County and 4 home visitation programs serving families with children ages 0 to 3 who are often in need of quality child care: 1) Families Together, 2) Early Head Start Home Visiting, 3) Public Health Field Nursing, and 4) Nurse Family Partnership.

Program Eligibility

ELS-P funding will be available to licensed family child care (FCC) and center-based infant/toddler programs providing state-subsidized care to infants and toddlers¹ in Santa Cruz County whose immediate caregiver(s) are enrolled in one or more of the 4 home visitation programs identified above. Programs must have current licenses with the Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services, and be in good standing. For the purposes of this pilot, state-subsidized care is defined as voucher-based child care (CalWORKs Stages 1-3 and Alternative Payment) or Title 5 subsidized contracts (specifically CCTR - General Child Care and Development and CMIG - Migrant Child Care and Development).²

In order to participate in ELS-P, programs must also participate in the Santa Cruz County Quality Counts, California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) framework at Implementation Step 1, 2 or 3 (as defined by First 5 California). See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: CA-QRIS Implementation Steps

Step	CA-QRIS Framework Elements	Quality Improvement Plan	Tiered Rating
Step 1 – Quality Improvement (QI)	Minimum of one element	Not Required	Not Required
Step 2 – Quality Improvement System (QIS)	Minimum of four elements, must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-Child Interactions • Family Engagement 	Required	Not Required
Step 3 – Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)	All elements of Rating Matrix ³ From Pathways, must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-Child Interactions • Family Engagement 	Required	Required

For a list of CA-QRIS Framework elements see Figure 2 below. First 5 Santa Cruz County staff and/or partners will help programs not currently participating in the Santa Cruz County Quality Counts CA-QRIS framework understand what it means to participate at each of the three steps summarized in Figure 1 above.

¹ Age group definitions: Infant: 0 to 24 months; Toddler: 24 months to less than 36 months.

² See: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalWORKs-Child-Care/Subsidized-Programs> for a brief description of subsidized child care programs in California.

³ Family child care applicants exclude elements 5) Ratios and Group Size and 7) Director Qualifications.

Figure 2: CA-QRIS Framework Elements

CA-QRIS Framework (15 total elements)	
Elements in the Rating Matrix (7 elements)	Elements in the CQI Pathways (8 elements)
CORE I: Child Development and School Readiness	
1. Child Observational Assessments 2. Developmental and Health Screenings	1. School Readiness 2. Social-Emotional Development 3. Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity
CORE II: Teachers and Teaching	
3. Qualifications for Lead Teacher/FCCH Owner (Education and Professional Development) 4. Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®)	4. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions 5. Professional Development
CORE III: Program and Environment	
5. Ratios and Group Size (Centers only) 6. Environment Rating Scales (ERS) 7. Director Qualifications (Centers only)	6. Environment 7. Program Administration 8. Family Engagement

ELS-P Rates

Programs that meet the criteria described above are eligible to receive ELS-P subsidies for each child served whose immediate caregiver(s) are enrolled in one or more of the 4 home visitation programs described above. Programs will be paid on a per child/per month rate determined by available funding, state subsidy type, setting (i.e. Family Child Care or Center) and full- or part-day⁴ status of children served. Maximum monthly reimbursement rates are outlined in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Maximum Per Child Monthly ELS-P Reimbursement Rates

Program Type	Full-Day Monthly	Part-Day Monthly
Title 5 Contract – Center, Infant	\$450	\$200
Title 5 Contract – Center, Toddler	\$290	\$120
Voucher – Center, Infant	\$280	\$40
Voucher – Center, Toddler	\$240	\$70
Voucher – FCC, Infant	\$190	\$0
Voucher – FCC, Toddler	\$230	\$0

Payment Process

ELS-P subsidies will be paid for services rendered between January 1, 2018 and June 30, 2018. To receive payment eligible programs are required to attest in writing that they are eligible for participation in the program. If programs are not currently participating in the Santa Cruz County Quality Counts, California Quality Rating and

⁴ For ELS-P funding used with a California Department of Education Title 5 Contract, Full Day is defined as 6.5 -10.5 hours a day and Part Day is defined as 4- 6.4 hours a day. For ELS-P funding used with a State Voucher, Full Day is defined as 30 hours per week and Part Day is defined as less than 30 hours per week.

Improvement System (CA-QRIS) framework they must commit to participating at minimum at the Step 1 level (as described above) in the 2018/2019 fiscal year (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) in order to be eligible for payment.

Eligible programs may seek payment by completing the attached ELS-P Payment Request Form and submitting the form with original signature to:

First 5 Santa Cruz County
Attn: ELS-P Program
4450 Capitola Road, Suite 106
Capitola, CA 95010

All payment request forms **must be received** by First 5 Santa Cruz County no later than **July 16, 2018**.

Please note: If the program has not previously received payment for services from First 5 Santa Cruz County a **completed W-9 must be included with the ELS-P Payment Request Form**.

Payments will be made to eligible programs on a first come first serve basis until funds are exhausted. First 5 Santa Cruz County reserves the right to refuse payment to anyone at its sole discretion.

An electronic copy of this document including the ELS-P Payment Request Form will be available for download on the First 5 Santa Cruz County website at: www.first5scc.org

Santa Cruz County Thrive by Three Early Learning Scholarship Pilot Program ELS-P Payment Request Form

Organization Information

Legal Name of Organization or Provider: _____

Name of Person Completing Form: _____

Telephone Number/Email Address: Tel: _____ Email: _____

Street Address: _____

Child Care Licensing Facility Number: _____

Santa Cruz County Quality Counts Implementation Step Level

This facility currently participates in Santa Cruz County Quality Counts (Mark Current Step Level)	Step 1 QI	Step 2 QIS	Step 3 QRIS
OR			
This facility does not currently participate in Santa Cruz County Quality Counts but agrees to participate at the Step Level indicated in the coming year (indicate Step Level)	Step 1 QI	Step 2 QIS	Step 3 QRIS

Per Child Monthly Subsidy Payment Request⁵

Child's First and Last Name Initials	Child's Date of Birth	Male or Female	Infant or Toddler ⁶	Subsidy Type: Contract or Voucher	Setting Type: Center or Family Child Care	Full Day or Part Day	Months Served in 2018 (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June) Check all that apply						Child's family is enrolled in the following home visitation program(s) Check all that apply ⁷			
							J	F	M	A	M	J	NFP	PHFN	FT	EHS
/	/ /	M or F	I or T	C or V	C or FCC	FD or PD										
/	/ /															
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By signing this form I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief this program is eligible to receive ELS-P funds and all information on this request is true and correct. I also confirm that I am authorized to seek payment on behalf of this program and my organization.

Authorized Signature **Title (Please Print)** **Date**

⁵ If you are requesting payment for more than four children please use additional forms. First 5 staff will verify information provided as appropriate and calculate payment amount.

⁶ Indicate if child was an infant or toddler on first day of month of service claimed on this form. See footnote 1 on page 2 for age group definitions.

⁷ Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), Public Health Field Nursing (PHFN), Families Together (FT), Early Head Start Home Visiting (EHS).